

VZCZCXRO1176

RR RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHCH #0370 0931210
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 021210Z APR 08
FM AMEMBASSY CHISINAU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6517
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CHISINAU 000370

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/UMB, EUR DAS MERKEL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/02/2018

TAGS: PGOV PREL MD

SUBJECT: REINTEGRATION MINISTER AGREES FIVE-PLUS-TWO REQUIRES CBM'S AND GOALS

REF: Chisinau 304

Classified By: Ambassador Michael D. Kirby, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Minister of Reintegration Sova agreed with the Ambassador that a successful "long Five-plus-Two" requires preparation, confidence-building measures (CBM's), and goals. While drawing red lines on troop withdrawal and the integrity of the state, he declared himself flexible and ready for general agreements, with details to be worked out later. Sova declared his sense of urgency that a solution be reached before 2009 elections, noted that he had had profitable consultations with parliamentary factions, and was delighted that President Bush had publicly stated his support for the Five-plus-Two process and Moldovan sovereignty. End summary.

¶2. (C) At an April 1 meeting which he requested, Sova said that he had been consulting parliamentary factions on progress towards a Transnistrian settlement, and noted his surprise that the meeting with anti-Russian firebrand Vitalia Pavlicenco (National Liberal Party) went more easily than his meeting with the Communist (PCRM) deputies, who are facing the reality that they will have to actually vote on a solution. (Note: The Ambassador has been pushing Sova and the GOM for months to meet with the opposition. End note.) Sova shared the Ambassador's views that an 80-to-90-member vote of approval (of 101 members) was required in Parliament, to signal a broad-based consensus, and indicated that he was aware of the Ambassador's briefing of opposition members on March 17 (reftel) regarding the Three-plus-Two talks in Vienna.

¶3. (C) Sova recognized that the internationally-sponsored 1992 ceasefire agreement between left-and right-bank Moldova requires that Russian troops be removed from Moldovan soil before joint elections can be held on both banks. He also stressed the need for flexibility, and mooted an 18-month transition period for the peacekeeping force.

¶4. (C) Underlining the need to reduce Transnistrian suspicions that the right bank is interested primarily in taking back property privatized by Tiraspol, he said that public debates on the subject should be limited if not eliminated, and the courts should decide after a settlement.

¶5. (C) Concerning the question of a fixed number of parliamentary seats for Transnistria, Sova said that he had discussed the idea with Gagauz Governor Mihail Formuzal, who noted that ethnic Gagauz hold six PCRM seats already, in addition to several others with other parties, far in excess of the two seats that the 80,000 voters in Gagauzia would elect on a proportional basis.

¶6. (C) Sova stated his expectation that President Voronin would telephone Transnistrian "President" Smirnov soon after the Bucharest NATO summit-a move, he said, that the Russians had insisted on. The call, he said, would be short, symbolic, and publicly acknowledged. He also hinted that it would be difficult. (Voronin and Smirnov dislike each other intensely.) However, he noted that the call was a

necessary preliminary to an April 14 meeting between the two sides in Odessa, to discuss CBM's, such as Dniester ecology. Ambassador Kirby added the issues of transport (railways, automobile licensing, and roads that may be built under MCC aegis), and stated his hope that DAS David Merkel would be able to attend.

¶7. (C) On dates for the Five-plus-Two, Sova agreed with the Ambassador that, given Easter holidays, Victory Day celebrations, and the installation of President Medvedev, May 12 is the earliest conceivable start for Five-plus-Two. Sova also continued to believe that St. Petersburg would be a good site, so that the Russians might feel more responsibility for a successful outcome. He also noted that a solution needs to be accomplished before 2009 parliamentary elections, since, he noted, MPs elected in 2009 would want to serve their full four-year term before the holding of elections that would follow a settlement and include Transnistria.

¶8. (C) Comment: Throughout the conversation, Sova showed himself engaged with the issues, open to suggestions, involved with Parliament, and ready to accommodate Transnistrian needs. The Voronin-Smirnov telephone call, if, as we hope, it happens, could be the significant move that begins the long road to a successful settlement. End comment.

Kirby